

Dear Sir or Madam:

I'm writing today in regard to FCC's potential decision to cap the Universal Service Fund (USF). As a resident of Iowa and a professional in the Telecommunications Industry, I'm well aware of the urban/rural technology gap we experience. While technologies continue to expand into rural markets, this is only possible with funding such as the USF.

In 1996, there was a Significant Telecommunications Act enacted that states all providers of telecommunications services should contribute to the Federal Universal Service Fund. It also states that there needed to be a way for the Federal and States to preserve and advance technologies with in schools, classrooms, health care and libraries – that is to say have access to advanced telecommunication services. It goes on to state those individuals whom reside in rural, low income, etc should have access to services at rates that are reasonable comparable to those charged in the urban areas.

In essence, the Universal Service Fund provides for the communication needs of all Americans, especially those who live in areas that may not otherwise be served by the wireless industry.

Wireless Telecommunications is no longer a luxury in our society; it is a fundamental necessity for public health, safety, and economic development. Rural America deserves the same fundamental services as the urban communities. Without additional funding that the USF provides, communication service providers are unable to financially deliver high-quality service unless they have a high quality network.

U.S. Cellular® is one of the wireless carriers who are committed to improving the telecommunications infrastructure in rural areas. We are passionate about our customers and know that by placing a cap on the Universal Service Fund, the cost to operate high-quality networks will likely cost more to the average customer. By preserving the USF funding, this will enable cellular carriers to build hundreds of additional cell sites in the coming years – sites that would not otherwise be able to justify financially. Worse yet, without extra funding from sources such as the USF, wireless network performance will begin to deteriorate. If this happens, rural America will be left behind with poor cell phone coverage, dropped calls and potentially dangerous dead zones.

Please help improve the lives of rural Americans by protecting and expanding the Universal Service Fund (USF) for wireless providers. Rural American deserves the same cell phone service as our big cities. The urban/rural technology gap will only widen if the USF is caped.

Sincerely,  
Mike McAllister  
Information Systems Infrastructure Analyst  
U.S. Cellular®